VICTIMS PROGRAMS

STATUS REPORT

2002/2003

Alberta
SOLICITOR GENERAL

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Grants totaling $1,953,731 were provided to 81 victim assistance programs in fiscal year 2002/03. Of this, $1,374,908 was paid out to applicants applying for funding in the 2002/03 fiscal year. The remaining $578,823 were for programs that received multi-year grants in previous years.
- 73% or $1,007,230 of grant funds for 2002/03 applicants were provided to police based (RCMP, municipal police, and First Nations police) programs.
- Community programs and projects received a total of $367,678 in grants for 2002/03 applicants.
- As of June 25, 2003, Alberta's network of police based victim assistance programs consisted of 77 programs operating 110 victim service units. Not all police based victim assistance programs received funding in 2002/03.
- Victim service programs reported handling 30,411 new cases. Over half (57%) involved assisting victims of violent crime.
- Programs reported providing services to 38,534 people in 2002/03, of which 30,952 (80%) were adults and 7,582 (20%) were children.
- The type of assistance most frequently provided for new and ongoing cases was information.
- Approximately 1790 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 220,880 volunteer hours.
- Providing general assistance (information, crisis intervention and referrals), accounted for 48% of volunteers' time.
- A total of 3,066 Victim Impact Statements were completed by victims of crime and, of those, 2,674 were forwarded to the Crown prosecutor's office once charges were laid.
- Victim Impact Statements were most often completed and filed in cases of common assault, sexual assault and domestic assault.
- During the year, 1,739 requests for restitution were completed and returned to the police. Of these, 1,601 were forwarded to the Crown. The majority (66%) of requests concerned non-violent crimes.

106-02765/

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

History

The *Victims' Programs Assistance Act,* proclaimed January 16, 1991, established the Victims Programs Assistance Fund and provided for the appointment of a Victims Programs Assistance Committee. The Committee was established to review grant applications for programs and services that benefit victims of crime and to make recommendations respecting funding to the Solicitor General.

The *Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)* was proclaimed August 1, 1997, for all provisions of the *Act*, except those directly associated with the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime. On November 1, 1997, the financial benefits section was proclaimed. The *Victims of Crime Act* replaced the *Victims' Programs Assistance Act* and *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act*, and established the authority to collect surcharges of 15% on provincial statute offences.

A Fund into which provincial and federal surcharges are collected and deposited was also established under *VOCA*. Section 10 of the *Act* provides for payments from the Fund. Expenditures include grants approved by the Solicitor General, costs incurred by the Victims of Crime Programs Committee, the Criminal Injuries Review Board, expenses to persons whose services are engaged by the Solicitor General, and financial benefits payable to victims of crime for injuries suffered. Salaries, benefits and other expenditures related to the administration of the *Act* are also paid from the Fund.

The *Act* includes principles respecting the treatment of victims and, establishes entitlements for victims to obtain certain information.

An office of the Director, *VOCA*, was created. This office operates within the Public Security Division, under the Department of the Solicitor General, and is responsible for the administration of the *Act*. Victims who do not feel they have been treated in accordance with the principles of the *Act* can obtain information from this office as to how to resolve their concerns.

Two core programs operate under *VOCA* - a financial benefits program for individual victims who have suffered injury as a result of a criminal offence, and a grants program that provides funding to groups and organizations offering information, assistance and support to victims during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

The *Act* established the Victims of Crime Programs Committee appointed by the Solicitor General. The Committee evaluates applications for grants to programs and makes recommendations to the Solicitor General on grant funding. Funding decisions made by the Solicitor General are based upon the Committee's recommendations.

VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Committee Members

The Committee consists of four members, with two members representing the community at-large, one member representing police, and one member representing government.

Members during 2002/2003 were:

Mr. Richard Smedstad (Chairman), member-at-large, Sherwood Park, Alberta;
Sgt. Mona Jorgensen (Calgary Police Service), representing police;
Ms. Diane Wickenheiser, member-at-large, Hays, Alberta;
Mr. Peter Teasdale (Alberta Justice), representing government

Committee Meetings

Meetings are scheduled twice per year to evaluate grant applications submitted for the April 1st and October 1st application deadlines. The Committee met on June 3rd, 2002 and December 9th and 10th, 2002. Sixty-two new grant applications were evaluated by the Committee and 61 applications were approved for funding by the Solicitor General.

FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Programs approved for funding are required to enter into agreements that outline terms and conditions to be met. In accordance with the agreement, funded programs are required to submit quarterly statistics, financial statements, and an evaluation report upon expiry of their funding term.

Grant Funding Formula

On October 1, 1999, a new grant funding formula was introduced to help ensure that grant monies are allocated fairly and equitably throughout the province. The formula is used to calculate a base funding amount for eligible programs. The formula:

- Allocates a specified amount from the Victims of Crime Fund to police based programs that provide basic services, and

- Utilizes a per crime amount that has been calculated using violent crime statistics from Uniform Crime Report data submitted to the Department of the Solicitor General by all police services.

Police based programs may receive additional funding if any of the following discretionary factors apply:

- large geographical area/low population density
- unique demographics
- weaker economic base
- lack of other support services
- new programs/projects
- other special circumstances that may be identified by the applicant.

Eligible specialized community programs/projects that benefit victims during the criminal justice process and are non-police based are also eligible for discretionary funding.

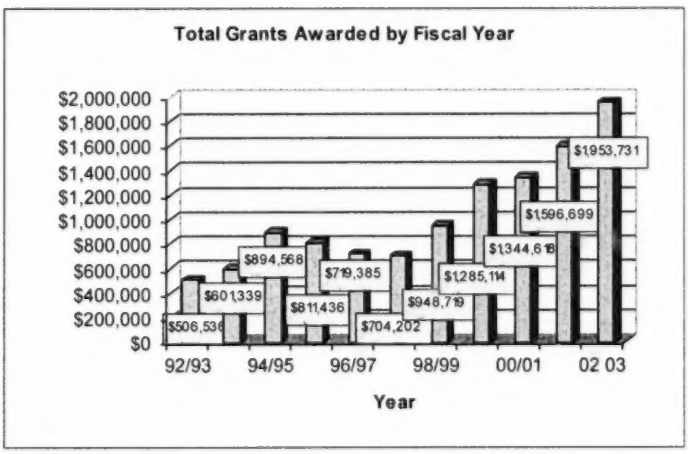
Eligible programs may receive a minimum grant of $2,000 and a maximum of $75,000 per year.

2002/2003 was the fourth year that eligible programs received multi-year grant funding commitments allowing them to budget for the future. To be considered eligible, an established program must have operated successfully for three years in a partnership with Alberta Solicitor General, met the conditions of previous funding agreements, and demonstrated sound management practices.

Grants Provided

Grants totaling $1,953,731 were provided to 81 programs for the 2002/2003 year. This amount represents a 22% increase in grant funding over 2001/2002 (Figure 1). Of the programs receiving funding, 59 were awarded grants for a one year term or received the first installment of a multi-year grant, while the remaining 20 programs were awarded multi-year funding in either 2000/01 or 2001/2002 and received their second or third year installments.

Figure 1

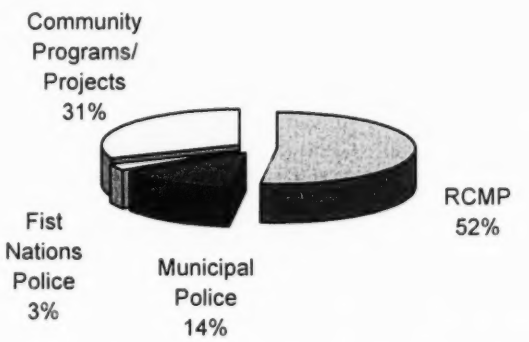


Grants to police based victim assistance programs accounted for 69%, or $1,347,830 of the total grants allocated in 2002/2003. Of that amount, $1,013,830 or 75% , was provided to RCMP affiliated victim service units, $274,000 (20%) was provided to municipal police services, and the remaining $60,000 (5%) was provided to First Nations police services.

Police based programs receive funding priority; however, other community groups and organizations that provide services to victims also receive funding. Community programs received 31% of the total grant funds provided, or $605,901.

Figure 2

Percentage of Grant Dollars Awarded by Types of Program in 2002/03



Police Based Programs

As a result of community support and grants from the Victims of Crime Fund, a network of police based victim assistance programs has been established that provides access to services for victims in 94% of the province (Appendix A). As of June 2003, there were 77 police based victims programs operating a total of 110 victims service units in Alberta.

Services provided to victims include intervention and support, information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, information about medical, legal and social services that can help, referrals to other community agencies, and court room orientation and accompaniment. These programs also provide victims of crime with information and assistance in completing victim impact statements, requesting restitution, and applying for financial benefits. Police based programs provide a continuum of services to victims from the time of first response by police to the disposition of the case by the Courts, and provide services in accordance with provincial guidelines.

The following grants were approved for police based programs in 2002/03:

Athabasca Regional Victim Services Society	***$18,000***
Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Assoc.	***$11,500***
Bashaw RCMP Victim Assistance Society	***$3,000***
Battle River Victim Assistance Society	***$30,000***
Beaverlodge RCMP Victims Assistance	***$10,000***
Big Country Victim Services Association	***$22,500***
Bonnyville RCMP Victim Services	***$12,050***
Bow Island/Foremost Victim Services	***$3,500***
Bow Valley Victim Services Association	***$25,000***
Brooks & District Victims' Assistance Association	***$26,850***
Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit	***$75,000***
Camrose & District Victim Services Society	***$10,000***
Cardium Region Victim Services Unit	***$27,000***
Coaldale Police Victim Assistance Services Assoc.	***$8,000***
Cochrane & Area Victim Services Society (CAVSS)	***$30,000***

Cold Lake Victim Services Society	*$15,000*
Edmonton Police Service	*$75,000*
Edson and District Victim Services Society	*$15,000*
Fort McMurray Victim Services Society	*$40,000*
Grand Cache Victim Services Society	*$6,000*
Grande Prairie & District RCMP Victims' Assistance Program Association	*$40,000*
Heartland Victim Services Unit Society	*$6,000*
High Level Community Policing Society	*$30,000*
Innisfail Victim Service Unit	*$8,000*
Lac La Biche Society, Victims Services Unit	*$17,500*
Leduc and District Victim Assistance Society	*$19,492*
Lesser Slave Indian Regional Council	*$25,000*
Lesser Slave Lake Regional Police Service	*$25,000*
Lethbridge Detachment Victim Assistance Society	*$1,750*
Louis Bull Police Service	*$10,000*
Medicine Hat Police Service	*$35,000*
Peace River Victim Services Society	*$35,000*
Pincher Creek & District Victim Assistance Society	*$14,800*
Ponoka Victim's Services Association	*$5,000*
Raymond/Magrath Victims Assistance Society	*$5,000*
Red Deer Rural Victim Assistance Society	*$7,500*
Redcliff RCMP Victim Service Unit	*$3,000*
Smoky River & District Victims' Assistance Program	*$10,000*
St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society	*$40,000*
Strathcona County RCMP Victim Services Unit	*$14,000*

Strathmore Regional Victim Services Association	***$30,000***
Sylvan Lake & District Victim Services Association	***$ 6,000***
Taber/Vauxhall Victim Service Unit	***$10,000***
Tofield Area Victims Service Association	***$14,000***
Two Hills Victim Services Society	***$ 5,000***
Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District	***$40,000***
Victim Services Unit (Assoc.) - Sturgeon Region	***$17,788***
Volunteer Programs Assoc.—Fort Saskatchewan	***$18,000***
Vulcan Regional Victim Services Society	***$3,000***
Wabasca Regional Victim Services Society	***$30,000***
Westlock Community Services Unit Association	***$18,000***
Total	***$1,007,230***

In addition to the grants listed above, the Victims of Crime Fund also supported the following police based programs which were awarded multi-year grants in 1999/2000, 2000/2001 or 2001/02:

• ***Airdrie & District Victim Assistance Society***	***$20,000***
• ***Chinook Arch Victim's Services Society***	***$20,000***
• ***Crisis Association of Vegreville***	***$10,900***
• ***Foothills Regional Victim Services Association***	***$25,000***
• ***High Prairie & District RCMP Victims Assistance***	***$40,000***
• ***Highway 43 RCMP Victims' Service Unit***	***$27,000***
• ***Hinton District Victim Services Society***	***$22,200***
• ***Lacombe Victim Services***	***$7,000***
• ***Lethbridge Police Service Victim/Witness Services Unit***	***$54,000***
• ***Lloydminster Regional Victim Services***	***$15,000***
• ***Rocky & District RCMP Victim Services Unit Society***	***$18,500***
• ***St. Albert Victim Services Association***	***$18,000***
• ***Slave Lake Victim Services Society***	***$25,000***
• ***Tofield Area Victims Service Association***	***$13,000***
• ***Wetaskiwin and District Victim Services Society***	***$25,000***
Total	***$340,600***

Total Grants Approved or Provided to Police Based Programs in 2002/2003	***$1,347,830***

Community Programs

Non-police based, or community programs, usually offer more specialized services. Grants may be awarded to programs that provide specialized services to victims of a particular type of crime, for example, domestic violence, or they may be awarded on a one-time basis for projects. Grants were provided to the following groups in 2002/2003:

Alberta Police Based Victim Services Association ***$68,500***
The grant was awarded to fund the development, implementation and evaluation of initial basic training for new Victim Services Coordinators, the continuation of the mentoring program as well as on-going professional development for all Coordinators.

Alberta Provincial Victim Services Conference ***$15,000***
This grant was provided to help support the costs of facilitating the Alberta Provincial Victim Services Conference held on May 8, 9 & 10, 2003. This conference brought together the four groups that work cooperatively to provide victim services: volunteer advocates, board members, police liaison officers, and program coordinators. This was the first time a victim service program in Alberta accepted the task of organizing and hosting such a conference.

ASSIST Community Services Centre ***$17,490***
ASSIST (formerly the Chinese Community Services Centre) provides Outreach services to Edmonton's Chinese community. This grant was provided to deliver culturally and linguistically relevant crisis intervention and support to victims of crime in Edmonton's Chinese community.

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) ***$36,000***
This grant was awarded to assist in the continuation of CCASA's Court Preparation Program. This program helps guide sexual abuse victims through the court process, and ensures court accompaniment. CCASA also provides individual and group counseling, school-based and community education programs, as well as a 24-hour crisis line.

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre ***$27,000***
The Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre provides crisis intervention, accompaniment to the RCMP, hospital accompaniment, and court preparation and accompaniment to victims of sexual assault in Red Deer and surrounding area. Funding was provided to assist with the operational and program costs associated with this organization.

Edmonton John Howard Society ***$62,100***
This grant was awarded to support the delivery of the John Howard Society's Victims' Assistance Program. This program provides assistance, information, referrals, court preparation and support to victims of domestic violence in the city of Edmonton.

K Country Conference Committee formerly Canmore Conference Committee ***$12,720***

The K Country Conference is an annual event that provides advanced victim services training to volunteer victim advocates and program coordinators. This educational event also presents opportunities for volunteers and program coordinators to network and share their knowledge and skills with others working in the field of victim services and crisis intervention. This grant was awarded to assist with costs associated with the conference's planning and organization.

Lloydminister Sexual Assault and Information Centre (LSAIC) ***$10,000***

The primary role of LSAIC is to provide crisis intervention, support and education to victims and survivors of sexual abuse. Services provided by LSAIC include accompanying victims to the hospital, to the RCMP, and preparing and accompanying sexual assault victims to court. Funding was provided to assist with the operational and program costs associated with this organization.

Multicultural Health Brokers Coop ***$43,868***

The Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op is a workers' co-operative whose mandate is to support immigrant/refugee individuals and families in attaining optimal health through education, community development and advocacy. This grant was awarded to assist in the development, translation and dissemination of a handbook about the rights and supports available to victims of crime in immigrant communities.

Zebra Child Protection Centre Society ***$75,000***

The Zebra Child Protection Centre was developed by members of the Edmonton Police Service, Child Protection Section, and co-professionals involved in the investigation of child maltreatment. The mandate of the Centre is to ensure that a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive investigation is conducted in the least intrusive and most protective environment possible. The program's advocates are specially trained to address the needs of victims of child physical and sexual abuse and their families. Funding was provided to assist with volunteer training and program maintenance costs.

Total ***$367,678***

In addition, a Victims of Crime Fund grant also supported the following community programs which received multi-year grants in either 1999/2000, 2000/2001 or 2001/02:

• ***Alberta Police Based Victim Services Association***	***$75,000***
• ***Calgary Legal Guidance***	***$37,500***
• ***Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse***	***$30,000***
• ***Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre***	***$15,000***
• ***Edmonton John Howard Society***	***$50,000***
• ***Partner Support Program***	***$30,723***
Total	***$238,223***

Total Grants Approved or Provided to Community Programs in 2002/2003 ***$605,901***

Total Grants Provided in 2002/2003 ***$1,953,731***

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Introduction

Information on the activities of victims service programs was collected using the Quarterly Report form. The Report collects information on the number of new cases, the number of persons assisted, and the type of assistance provided. For each of these variables, the Report categorizes assistance provided as either *Criminal Code – Violent* (e.g. homicide, violent sex offences, serious assaults, etc.), *Criminal Code – Non-violent* (e.g. forgery, fraud, theft, etc.), *Offence Non-criminal* (offences that do not fall within the *Criminal Code of Canada*, i.e., Provincial Statute Offences) or *Assistance – No offence* (e.g. sudden death, notifying next-of-kin, motor vehicle collisions, suicide, etc.).

The Report also measures the number of volunteer hours, the number of victim impact statements completed and forwarded to the Crown prosecutor's office, and the number of restitution requests completed and forwarded to the Crown prosecutor.

The statistics were collected from quarterly report forms submitted by victim service units. Conditional funding agreements stipulate that all victim service units that receive a Victims of Crime Fund grant are required to submit quarterly statistics.

New Cases

During 2002/2003 victim service programs reported handling 30,411 new cases. New cases refers only to those cases (files) opened during the reporting quarter. A case may involve one or more victims, and family members or friends affected by an incident of crime.).

Figure 3

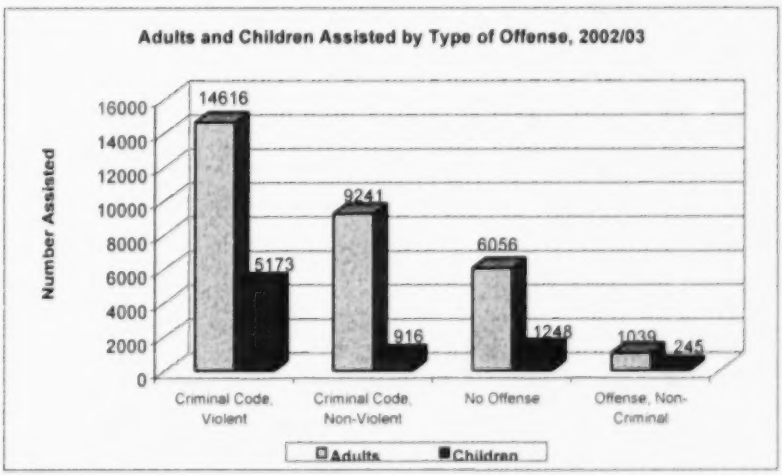
New Cases by Type of Offense, 2002/03

Of the 30,411 new cases, over half (57%) involved assisting victims of violent *Criminal Code* offences (Figure 3). Assistance was least often provided when the offence was Non-criminal (i.e., a Provincial Statute Offence.)

Persons Assisted

Programs reported providing assistance to 38,534 people in 2002/2003, of which 30,952 (80%) were adults and 7,582 (20%) were children. Approximately half of the people assisted (51%) were victims of a *Criminal Code – Violent* offense, followed by people assisted in the *Criminal Code – Non-violent* offence category (26%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4



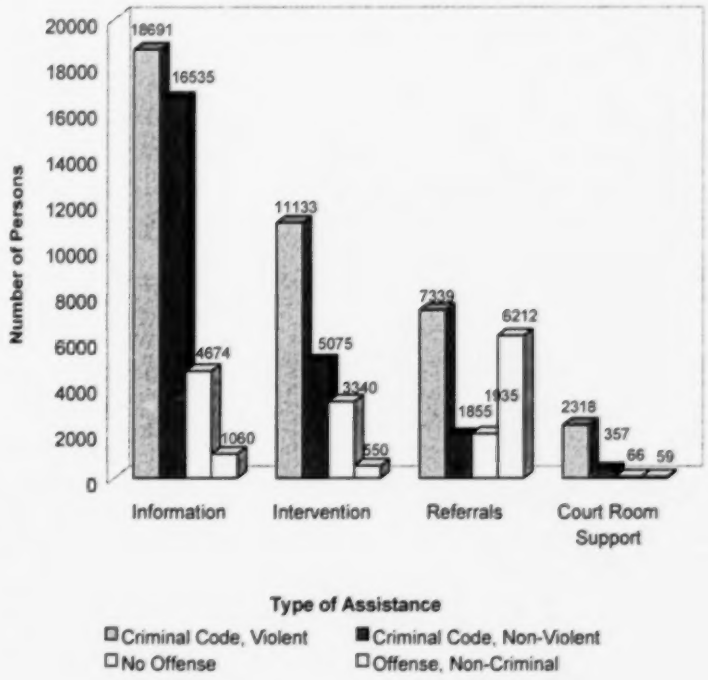
Type of Assistance

The type of assistance most frequently provided for new and ongoing cases was information. Intervention, which includes crisis response, notification of next of kin, or practical assistance at a crime scene was the second most common type of assistance provided. This was followed by referrals to other agencies. Court room support was provided in the least number of cases, whether new or ongoing (Figure 5).

Assistance was most often provided when the incident/offence was in the *Criminal Code – Violent* category. Assistance was least likely to be provided where the incident/offence was in the *Offence – Non-criminal* category.

Figure 5

Type of Assistance Provided for New and Ongoing Cases, 2002/03



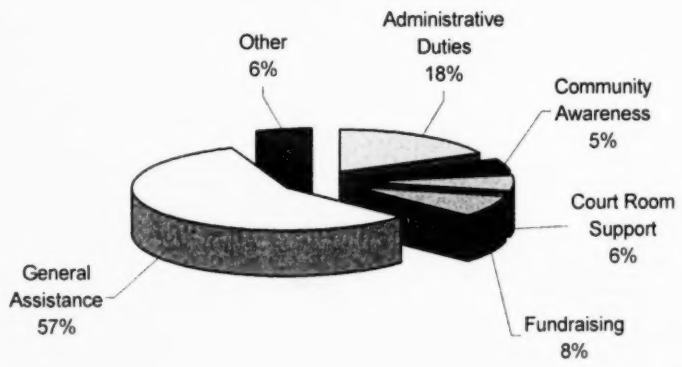
Volunteer Hours

In 2002/2003, approximately 1,790 volunteer advocates and Board members contributed a total of 220,880 volunteer hours. This equates to approximately 117 people working full time for a one year period. This figure also includes hours volunteered by program staff over and above their paid time. During the same year, on average, programs employed 67 full-time and 66 part-time paid staff.

Providing general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims accounted for 48% of volunteer time. Sixteen percent (16%) of volunteer hours were dedicated to training, followed closely by administrative duties, at 15%. The remaining hours were spent on fundraising (7%), community awareness (4%), other activities such as meetings and travel time (5%), and court room support (5%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Volunteer Hours, 2002/03



ALBERTA SOLICITOR GENERAL INITIATIVES

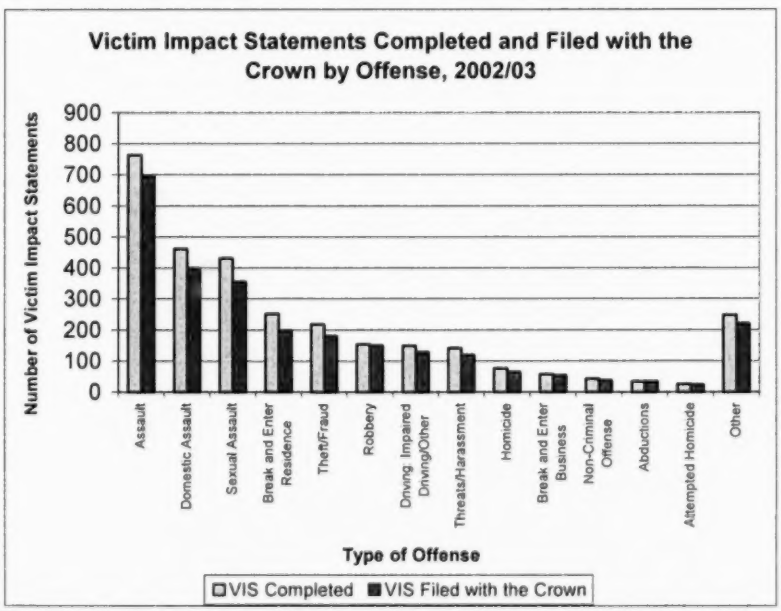
Victim Impact Statement Program

The Victim Impact Statement Program provides victims in Alberta with the opportunity to have input into sentencing by describing in writing, to the Court, how they have been affected by the crime.

Police notify all victims of crime of this opportunity and provide information about the nearest victim service unit, where the victim impact statement form and assistance in completing it can be obtained. The completed statements are returned to the police or victim service unit, who review the statement and forward it to the Crown prosecutor. As of December 1, 1999, victims have the option of reading their statements aloud in court. If the victim has chosen to do so, the police or victim services notify the victim of the court dates for sentencing. Prior to sentencing, the Court is required to inquire if the victim has been advised of the opportunity to prepare a statement, and may adjourn proceedings to permit the victim to prepare a statement.

In the 2002/2003 reporting period, a total of 3,066 statements were completed and 2,674 statements were forwarded to the Crown Prosecutor's Office. This is a 19% increase in the number of Victim Impact Statements completed and forwarded to the Crown in 2001/02. Of these statements, the majority (57%) concerned common assault, sexual assault and domestic assault (Figure 7). *Note: The difference in number completed and number forwarded occurs because a charge must be laid before statements are forwarded to the Crown.*

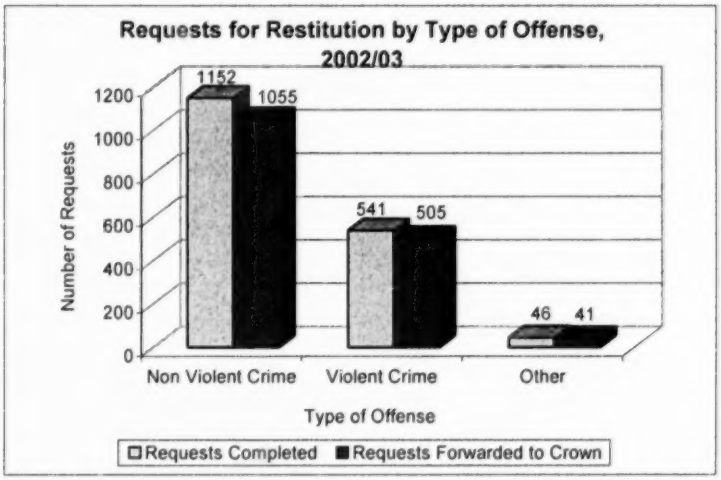
Figure 7



Requesting Restitution Program

The Requesting Restitution Program provides victims of crime who have suffered a financial loss with information about how they can request that the offender pay restitution. A crime victim may complete a Request for Restitution Form provided by the police officer investigating the case or a victim support worker. Once the form is completed, the victim returns it to police, who then forward it to the Crown prosecutor. The Crown prosecutor may make the application for restitution to the Court, or may decline to do so. If the Crown declines, the victim may request the Court to do so on its own motion.

Figure 8



Restitution may be ordered for damage, destruction and loss of property, bodily harm, expenses incurred in moving out of the offender's house, as in spousal abuse cases, or for losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property.

For the 2002/2003 year, 1,739 requests for restitution were completed and returned to police and 1,601 were forwarded to the Crown. This represents an increase of 9% and 10%, respectively, from 2001/2002. The majority of the requests for restitution concerned non-violent crime, with the next largest category being violent crime (Fig. 8)

Victim Assistance Coordinator Training

In 2003, 50 participants attended Victim Assistance Coordinators' Training. Participants included victim service unit program coordinators, victim advocates, police members, Court Services staff, Criminal Justice Divisions of Alberta Justice staff, and Alberta Solicitor General Public Security Division staff, and Aboriginal Justice Initiatives representatives.

The training provides information about the criminal justice system, federal and provincial legislation concerning victims of crime, and information on related programs to assist victims in Alberta.

Victim Awareness Handbook

The Victim Awareness Handbook was developed as a "hands-on" resource that is used to inform people who provide services to victims of crime with information about issues facing victims. In 2002/03 240 Handbooks were distributed to Crown prosecutors offices throughout Alberta.

Victim Advocate Training Manual

In 2002, Alberta Solicitor General distributed the *Victim Advocate Training Manual* to victim service units throughout Alberta. The development and implementation of this manual is the result of an extensive consultation process with representatives from Alberta Police Based Victims Services Association, RCMP "K" Division, Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police, and Alberta First Nations Chiefs of Police. The Manual provides the content and framework for 34 training modules which focus on developing Victim Advocate skills, and educating Victim Advocates about crime and trauma, the justice system, and working with diverse clients. The Manual establishes a provincial standard for Victim Advocate training, and creates an opportunity for Victim Advocates to become certified.

Quarterly Report Form

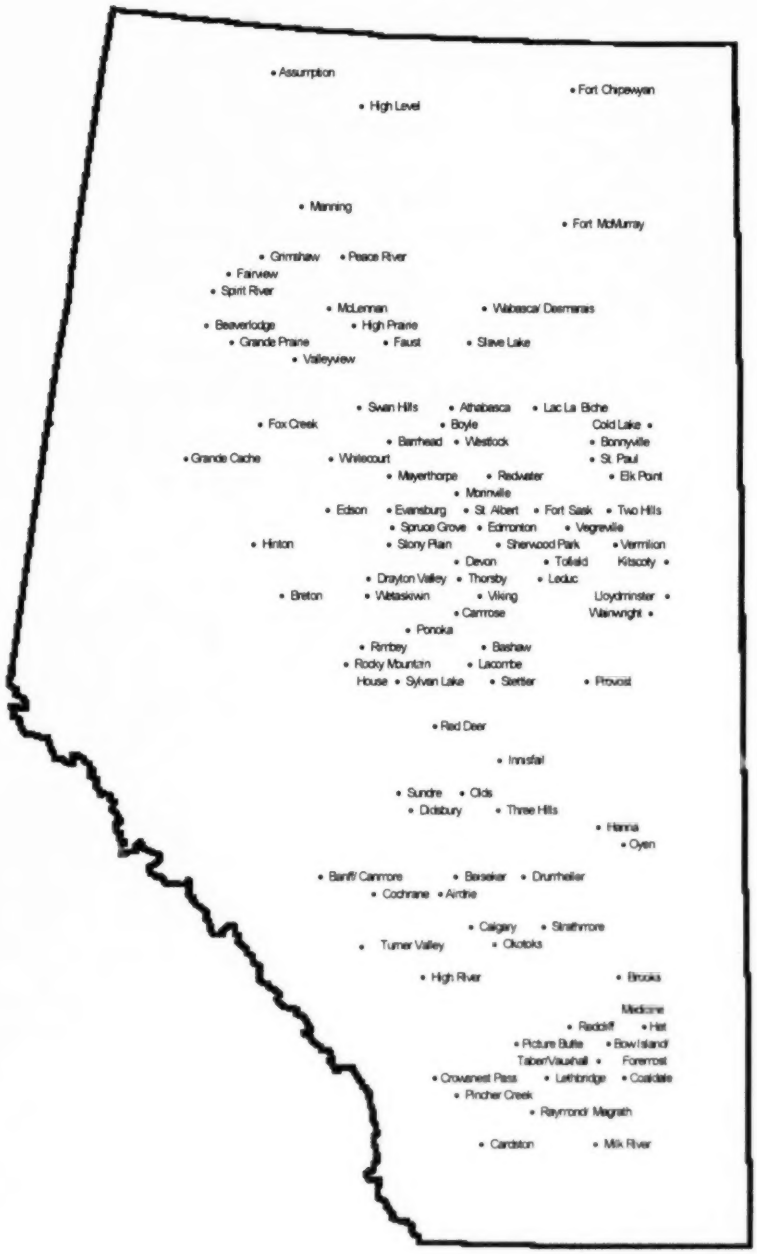
Since April 1, 1998, victim service programs have been required to complete the Victim Services Quarterly Report. This statistical collection form provides Alberta Solicitor General with information about services provided to victims and acts as a measure of accountability for grant monies awarded. The Quarterly Report has standardized the reporting process and improved the quality of information collected about services provided to victims in Alberta.

Brochures

A series of brochures designed to increase awareness of programs available to victims of crime and to provide specific information on victim impact statements, restitution and financial benefits is distributed to police services, victim services units and other agencies that provide assistance to victims of crime.

APPENDIX A

ALBERTA POLICE BASED VICTIM SERVICE UNITS



CONTACT US

To obtain copies of brochures go to http://www.dbf.com/mktg/acsc/request_ext.asp. For additonal information, contact Alberta Solicitor General at:

Victims Programs
Public Security Division
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building
10365 – 97 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3W7
Phone: (780) 427-3460 (local calls) or
310-0000 (toll-free within Alberta)
or through our web-site at http://www.solgen.gov.ab.ca/victim/